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V.—*On the German Vernacular of Pennsylvania.*

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Pennsylvania German—improperly called “Pennsylvania Dutch” is not normal German corrupted after its arrival in America, but a fusion of the South German dialects brought from the region of the upper Rhine, including Switzerland. To these localities we must look for its characteristics, except the infusion of English, and in adopting more or less of this foreign element, it follows the natural law of all languages, in taking up new or convenient terms for new objects, so that a word like *clearing* (land cleared by the destruction of a forest) comes into American German as naturally as *prairie* came into English.

Nor is this English element confined to Pennsylvania German, for the advertisements of High German newspapers in the cities of New York, Buffalo, Chicago, Little Rock, Des-moines, Philadelphia, Galveston, and others, cannot be read by a German unacquainted with English. Here we find —

Ein prachtvolles 2stöck. und Basement Brichhaus in 10. Ward, volles Lot . . . Ein großes Country Hotel. . . Eine schöne Farm. . . Barn und allen Geräthschaften. . . Mortgages werden als Zahlung angenommen. . . Wird vertauscht gegen Brooklyn Property. — Verlangt: Mädchen, die Strich und Bultures nähen können. . . Topfloor, Room 16. . . Operators und Waisters . . . Ein Front- und Rearhaus. . . durchaus gepaintet. . . ein 2stöck. und Basement Framehaus. . . gute Gegend für eine Grocery-Store — Ein Grocery-store mit Stock und Fixtures. . . Lagerbier-Salon mit Boardinghaus — Ein Drygoods-Store. . . an einem Corner — Ein Butchershop — Ein Kaffee-Salon verbunden mit Candy, Soda-Wasser, Mootbier, Eiscream, etc.— (*New-Yorker Staats-Zeitung*, 8 Aug., 1870.)

In Pennsylvania German the *a* is sounded as in *what*, *fall*, the nominative form ‘*der*’ replaces the accusative *den*, the imperfect tense is avoided, both as in Swiss, and the perfect is used instead, so that for *ich sagte* (I said), *ich hatte* (I had), *ich kam* (I came), we have ‘*ich hab ksaat*, *ich hab kat*, *ich bin kummə*.’ The nominative neuter article *das* becomes ‘*des*,’

infinitive -n is dropped, and many other finals replace it with nasality — which are features common to Suabian, as well as the almost exclusive use of -li as a diminutival. To the German strong verbs the weak inflection is given, so that, instead of *er ißt he eats*, *er fällt he falls*, *er fragt he asks*, we have (*æ* in fat) ‘*ær esst, ær fallt, ær frookt.*’

The three following detached stanzas are from Harbaugh’s *Harfe* (Poems in this dialect, 1870), to which I add translations.

“Der Mond is[siss] uf — er is juscht voll —
 The moon is up — so full and fair,
 'R piept zum Fenschter rei[herein] — guck mol —²²
 It peeps into the window there,
 Un scheint uf's Bett un Floor.
 And shines on bed and floor:
 Was regt sich an der Wand? ich glaab,
 What plays upon the wall? I b'lieve
 'S is Schattenspiel von Babbelaab:
 The shadow of a poplar leaf, —
 So hab ich's g'seh' zuvor. p. 33.
 As I have seen before.

Ei guck, wie schnell der Mond nuf[hinauf] eilt;
 But see! the moon has upward gone;
 Wie lang hab ich mich doch verweilt!
 How long indeed I've linger'd on —
 Ich muss mich widder geh'.
 Again I must now go;
 Gut Nacht, klee'[flein] Stübche'! halt, ich meen
 Good night my bedroom! stay — I feel
 'S wär Ebbes in mei'm Aagr — 'n Dhreen!
 A something in my eye — a tear!
 Der Abschied, der dhut weh!
 Departure — this is woe! p. 35.

'S is Alles schtill! Die Kinner schtecke
 All is still! the children nestle
 Schnock im Bett un draame schee';
 Snug in bed, with pleasant dreams;
 Santa Claus werd sic net wecke,
 Santaclaus will not awake them,
 Er dhut all sei' Sach allee';
 He does all his work alone;
 Hengt d'r Baam mit Scheene Sache,
 Decks the tree with pretty trifles,
 Schleicht herum im ganze Haus,
 Slips about th' entire house,
 Legt sei' Gabe 'raus mit Lache,
 Scatters gifts around with laughing,
 Un dann — Ho! — zum Schornschtee' naus!" p. 40.
 And then up the flue departs.

The next example, by Tobias Witmer of Buffalo, has certain 'Sunday Concerts' in view. I add a translation and notes, and retain the not quite uniform spelling of the original:

"DIE FRESCHLIN.

THE FROGS.

Die freschlin hen¹ e² grosze jacht,³
 The frogs have always quite a din
 Si peiffe⁴ schiir die ganze nacht,
 For half the night, and toads strike in
 Die krotte dun 'ne⁵ helfe;
 To aid (perhaps outvie) them;
 Doch wann ebmol der reife⁶ kummt,
 Tow'rd midnight, if the frost appears
 So is⁷ ir' liedle glei⁸ verstummt,
 Their voices cease to reach our ears,
 Si geen ins bet am zwelfe.
 And then to bed they hie them.
 Wan's nord⁹ e bissel wermer werd,
 If t were a little warmer now
 Es grosse dreckloch ausgederret,
 To desiccate that muddy slough
 So mitte in dem juuli,
 As usual in mid July,
 Nord⁹ fange d' grosze bullfraags an¹⁰
 Then giant bullfrogs would begin
 Un bloose, das mer¹¹'s heere kaa,
 To let us hear their vocal din
 So weit wie unser muuli,¹²
 As far as our mooley.
 Wan ich jetz¹³ weer e musikand,⁷
 Could I instruct in tune and dance
 Un keem juscht vom Franzooseland,
 And were I just arrived from France
 Dart woo'sich d' kaiser mache;
 Where kings are self-elected,
 Ich greecht¹⁴ e musik' schuul in gang
 A school I d soon get under way
 Di fresch zu lerne, 's nehm net lang,
 To teach the frogs to sing and play —
 Ja gwisz, du brauchscht net lache.
 Do n't laugh, ye disaffected!
 E dutzet bullfraags miszte nej,¹⁵
 A dozen bullfrogs I would get,
 E hundert gleene¹⁶ fresch derbei,
 A hundred little ones I d pet —
 Die krotte far der tenor;
 The toads should sing the minor,
 E' groszes loch voll laager biir,
 A puddle full of lager beer
 Des miich¹⁷ de fresch di hels recht kliir¹⁸
 Would make their raucous throats quite clear —
 Du weescht,¹⁹ — was weer jetz schener?
 What could indeed be finer.

Nord⁹ kriigt¹⁴ ich miir en groosse saal
 Then would I get a stately hall
 Un adverteis⁷ en sunntaags baal
 And advertise a Sunday Ball,
 Mit meine musikante;⁷
 With music-frogs a million;
 Dii veegel miszte all derzuu,
 I d have as guests the various fowl —
 Dr Condor un dr Uhu-huu
 The condor and the graceful owl
 Dii tantze mit enander.²⁰
 Would start a grave cotillion.

 Des weer der human familii
 'T would be to man's proud family
 En pattern of gentilitii
 A pattern of gentility
 Si kente sich impruufe,
 With which I could delight them;
 Si hen¹ e fäct schun ardlich²¹ glernt,
 They have in fact begun to learn —
 Es gebt e mol²² e groosse erndt —
 The ball would yield a fair return —
 Der Guckuk werd si ruufe."
 The cuckoo shall invite them.

¹ For *haben* *have*, as in South German; — *han* of the Minnesingers. A dative form of the pronoun is used in 'm'r hen' (Swiss *mer hend*) *we have*; 'd'r hent' (Swiss *der hend*) *you have*.

² The German article *ein*, *eine* reduced, like English *a*, and pronounced indistinctly.

³ The common Penn. Germ. word for *noise*, *Lärm*. ⁴ *Sie pfeiffen* *they pipe*.

⁵ For the dative *ihnen*; or possibly, a regular plural of *ihn*.

⁶ German *der Reif* *rime-frost*. About midnight the cold causes them to cease.

⁷ The *s* is not used as English *z*. ⁸ *gleich* *presently, directly*.

⁹ *Then*, a metathesis of *darnach*.

¹⁰ This word is the vowel of *fall* nasalised, and the word below rhymes with it.

¹¹ The German plural dative *mir* used impersonally in the singular, for *man*, *one*, as in Swiss, &c. See note ¹.

¹² English *mooley* a hornless cow. From the Irish and Gaelic.

¹³ For *jetzt*, but *nau* (Eng. *now*) is more used. In a funeral sermon lately heard (1870) in the dialect, although the speaker endeavored to use *jets*, he often fell into *nau*, and he used but one other English word, in saying that 'salvation depends upon certain conditions' — pronouncing the word as in English, but with a pure hissing final.

¹⁴ *Greecht*, also *griicht* and *kriigt* *I would get*; Ger. *friegen* *to seize, get*.

¹⁵ *müßten hinein* *would have to be in*. ¹⁶ Plural of *flein* *little*.

¹⁷ *Des mich* *this would make*. *Des mich alles recht* *this would make all right*.

¹⁸ The English word *clear*. ¹⁹ *Du weißt* *thou knowest*.

²⁰ *Enanner* is usually without the *d*.

²¹ *Tolerably*; from *ordentlich* *orderly*. ²² *e mol*, *ein mal* *once*.